

Medoc Mountain State Park General Management Plan



North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

Division of Parks and Recreation-

Piedmont Region

MAY 2017

I. MISSION AND PURPOSE

MISSION STATEMENT:

Conservation: To protect North Carolina's natural diversity through careful selection and stewardship of state parks system lands;

Recreation: To provide and promote outdoor recreation opportunities in the state parks system and throughout the state; and

Education: To encourage appreciation of North Carolina's natural and cultural heritage through diverse educational opportunities;

For all citizens of and visitors to the State of North Carolina.

PURPOSE: The State of North Carolina offers unique archaeologic, geologic, biologic, scenic and recreational resources. These resources are part of the heritage of the people of this State. The heritage of a people should be preserved and managed by those people for their use and for the use of their visitors and descendants.

PARK PURPOSE:

Local interest in having a state park located in Edgecombe, Halifax, Nash, Northampton, and Wilson counties led to the Division of Parks and Recreation conducting an extensive survey to identify sites possessing qualities desirable for a state park. The survey identified one suitable area, Medoc Mountain/Fishing Creek, because of its unique mixture of natural, scenic and recreational resources and its potential for interpretation and education. The survey report, presented to the State Parks Committee of the Board of Conservation and Development in May 1972, recommended that (1) Medoc Mountain and 3,000 acres of surrounding land be acquired; (2) Fishing Creek be designated as a N.C. Natural and Scenic River; and (3) a park corridor be established from Medoc Mountain to Fishing Creek via Little Fishing Creek.

The recommendations were supported locally and by the State Parks Committee. The Halifax Development Commission secured an option to purchase the standing timber on Medoc Mountain, thus preventing its harvest. While *Natural and Scenic* river designation and establishment of a riparian park corridor never materialized, state land acquisition moved forward. The first parcel was acquired in October 1973, and by March of 1975, over 2,200 acres had been purchased. In March 2006, The Nature Conservancy, International Paper and The Conservation Fund announced an agreement to protect nearly 220,000 acres of forestland across 10 states. On June 11, 2007, Medoc Mountain State Park benefited from the historic agreement when Nature Conservancy sold the state three tracts totaling 1,530 acres for an addition section to the park.

Medoc Mountain is a monadnock that rises 325 feet above sea level and 170 feet above the surrounding terrain, thus creating steep topography unusual for the northeastern Piedmont. The mountain, which is actually a weather- and erosion-resistant ridge, is one of the easternmost formations of crystalline rock in the state. The Medoc Mountain area is particularly significant geologically because it contains one of the largest molybdenum deposits known in the southeastern United States. The metallic mineral molybdenum, valued as an alloy because of its high strength

and low weight, occurs in some quartz veins and portions of granite as the mineral molybdenite. Pyrite, or "fool's gold," is often found with molybdenite.

Diverse combination of forest types are segregated according to the steep topography for the fall line. The Medoc Mountain Registered Natural Heritage Area (185 acres) encompasses xeric pine-hardwood and hardwood forests on the slopes, with floodplain and lowland hardwood communities along the creeks. The Little Fishing Creek Bluffs includes 20 acres. The Beech Ravine Registered Natural Heritage Area lies on the steep east-facing slopes of Little Fishing Creek. Beech trees dominate the canopy except for a few scattered red oaks. The natural areas range from the chestnut oak and mountain laurel communities and extend to beech and mountain laurel communities. The Little Fishing Creek Aquatic Habitat was recently reclassified as Nationally Significant due to its diversity of rare biological resources. The section of the creek that flows through the park supports six rare freshwater mussel species, three of which are federal species of concern. In addition, populations showing good water quality include rare Roanoke Bass (*Ambloplites cavifrons*) and the Neuse River Waterdog (*Necturus lewisi*), both of which are endemic to the Tar and Neuse River drainage areas, make their home in the park in Little Fishing Creek.

The significant scenic resources of the park include: exposed rock outcrops and steep bluffs rising up to 50 feet above Little Fishing Creek. The creek, with its gentle riffles, twists, turns, and flows through a mixture of bottomland hardwoods, annuals, and other herbaceous plants and wildflowers.

Medoc Mountain State Park offers various outdoor recreational opportunities compatible with protection of the natural resources of the park. The location, less than 10 miles from I-95, enhances out-of-state and regional access. Little Fishing Creek provides an easy and rewarding paddling experience, while the hiking, mountain biking and equestrian trails provide a variety of opportunities for various users to explore the park. Individual and group visitors may enjoy additional activities such as nature study, star gazing, fishing, picnicking, and camping.

Medoc Mountain State Park exists so that its valuable geologic, biologic, scenic, and recreational values can be protected. The Division of Parks and Recreation is charged with preserving those values and providing park experiences that promote pride in and understanding of natural heritage of North Carolina.

II. HISTORY

Medoc Mountain is not really a mountain; its highest point reaches an elevation of only 325 feet above sea level. It is the core of what was once a mighty range of mountains - Medoc Mountain is what remains after millions of years of erosion. The eroded peaks were formed by volcanic action during the Paleozoic Age, about 350 million years ago.

An elongated structure of biotite granite, Medoc Mountain has effectively routed the streams of the area around itself and has resisted the erosion typical of the surrounding lowlands. The park sits near the fall line, an area where the hard, resistant rocks of the foothills give way to the softer rocks and sediments of the coastal plain. The northern and western faces of Medoc Mountain have steep slopes, dropping 160 feet over a distance of less than a quarter mile. The rugged terrain is unusual for the eastern piedmont.

The mountain and surrounding land have long been used for agriculture. Once the property of Sidney Weller, a noted farmer and educator, the area was used for the cultivation of grapes in the 19th century. Weller produced a highly acclaimed wine known as Weller's Halifax and is credited with developing the American system of grape culture and winemaking. It was Weller who named the mountain "Medoc," after a province in the Bordeaux region of France famous for its vineyards. Weller organized and operated an academy for area children and assisted with the development of the first North Carolina State Fair in 1853.

Following Weller's death in 1854, his land was sold. The vineyards continued to produce into the early 20th century, but the land was later subdivided, sold and used for the production of other crops. The vineyards disappeared, and little trace of them remains. The high ridge and the slopes of Little Fishing and Bear Swamp creeks are the only places in the area that have not been extensively cultivated. A grist mill operated in the area until the late 19th century.

In the 1920s, a Boy Scout camp was built on the summit of the mountain and a few years later, lumbermen cut the mountain forest for timber. In the early 1930s, a deposit of molybdenum was discovered near the summit. Exploration of the site occurred in the 1930's and again in the late 1960s, scarring the land though no significant mining operations took place. For many years, local residents used the area for hunting, horseback riding and hiking. Numerous old roads and trails passing through the woods are evidence that these forests have had minimal human impact.

In 1970, citizens proposed the creation of a state park in the area. In 1972, the Division of Parks and Recreation surveyed a five-county area for a suitable site and recommended Medoc Mountain and the surrounding land. The Halifax Development Commission obtained a one-year option to purchase timber on the mountain from Union Camp, allowing the state time to acquire 2,300 acres of land to establish the park.

III. THEMES AND INVENTORY

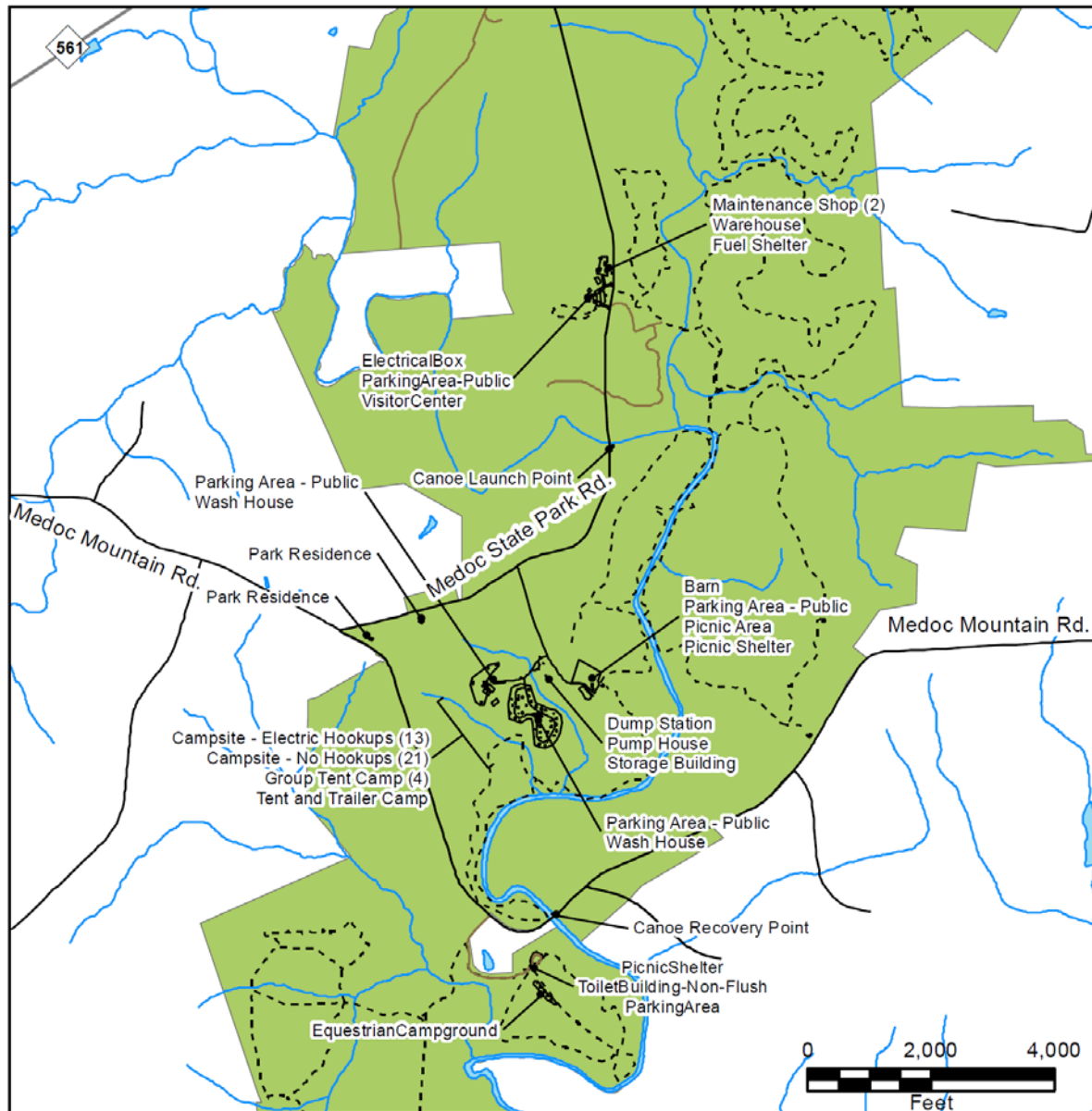
Medoc Mountain State Park Theme Table

Theme Type	Theme	Medoc Mountain Significance	State Parks System Representation
Archeological/Historic	Recreation	High	Adequate
Archeological/Prehistoric	Campsite/Activity Area	High	Adequate
Biological	Brown water Coastal Plain Floodplains	High	Moderate
Biological	Piedmont and Coastal Plain Mesic Forests	High	Adequate
Biological	Piedmont and Coastal Plain Oak Forests	High	Adequate
Biological	Piedmont and Mountain Floodplains	Moderate	Adequate
Geological	Carolina Bays	High	Adequate
Geological	Faults, Joints, and Related Features	Little	None
Geological	Fluvial Depositional Features	High	Adequate
Geological	Intrusions	Little	Adequate
Scenic	Caves/Cliffs	High	Little
Scenic	Forests	High	Moderate
Scenic	Marshes	High	Moderate
Scenic	Meadows/Grasslands	High	Little
Scenic	Pocosins	High	Moderate
Scenic	Rivers	High	Moderate
Scenic	Rock Outcrops	High	Little
Scenic	Scenic Vistas	High	Moderate
Scenic	Swamps	High	Adequate

*See the Systemwide Plan for references to Theme and inventory terms. Themes have both actual and “potential” future needs to be at a park.

FACILITIES INVENTORY

MEDOC MOUNTAIN STATE PARK

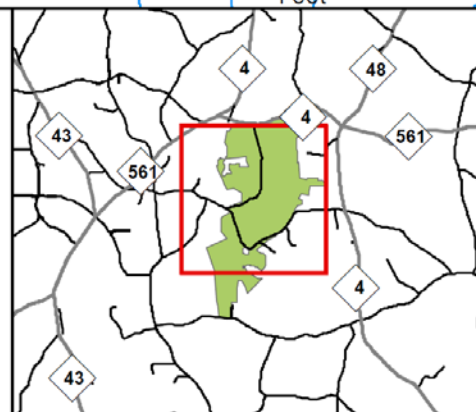


Medoc Mountain State Park Facility Inventory

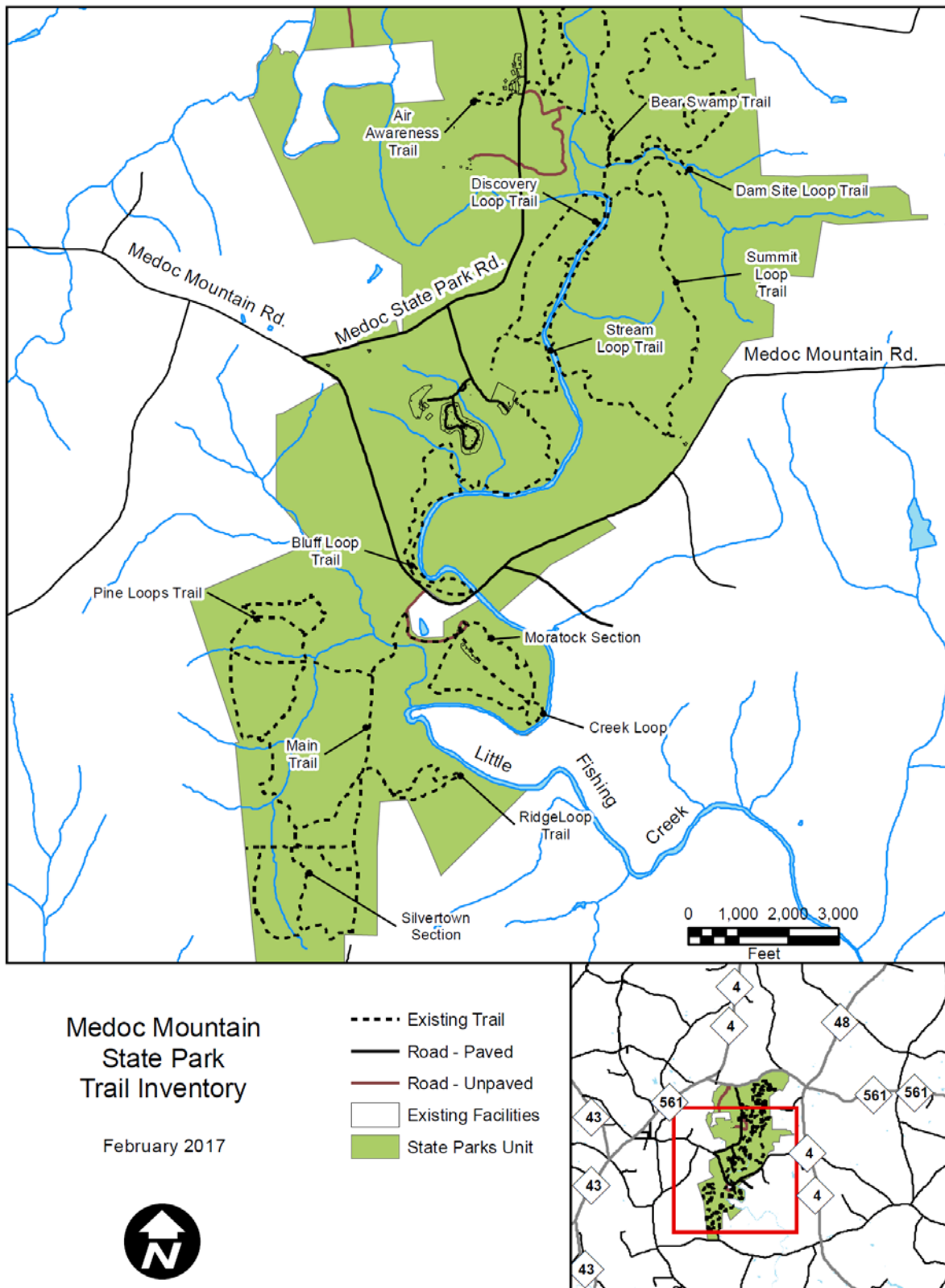
February 2017



- Existing Trails
- Road - Paved
- Road - Unpaved
- Existing Facilities
- State Parks Unit



TRAILS INVENTORY MEDOC MOUNTAIN STATE PARK



TRAIL INVENTORY
MEDOC MOUNTAIN STATE PARK

Trail Inventory	Hiking	Multi-Use	Mountain Bike
Air Awareness Trail	0.50		
Bear Swamp Trail	0.75		
Bluff Loop Trail	3.00		
Connector Trail	0.40	0.40	
Dam Site Loop Trail	1.00		
Discovery Loop Trail	1.39		
Main Trail (Equestrian)	0.95	0.95	
Moratock Section (Equestrian)	1.53	1.53	
Pine Loops Trail (Equestrian)	2.66	2.66	
Pyrite			5.30
Ridge Loop Trail (Equestrian)	0.83	0.83	
Saponi			3.30
Silvertown Section (Equestrian)	2.90	2.90	
Stream Loop Trail	0.75		
Summit Loop Trail	3.11		
Weller			2.10
Medoc Mountain SP Totals (miles)	19.77	9.27	10.70

HIKING:

Air Awareness Trail is a 0.50-mile long universal trail that starts and ends near the Visitor Center.

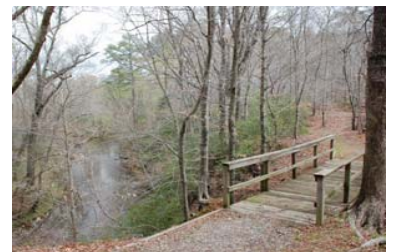
Bear Swamp Loop Trail: is a 0.75-mile trail that connects the Visitor Center and the Dam Site loop trail. Point of interest includes the steel bridge over the Little Fishing Creek.

Bluff Loop Trail: is a 3 mile hiking trail that begins at the southeast side of the picnic shelter. The bluffs offer a view of the Little Fishing Creek over 80 feet below.

Creek Loop Trail is 0.50-mile trail for hikers and equestrians located off the Moratock Trail. The trail meanders through forested area and travels along Little Fishing Creek.



Air Awareness Trail



Bluff Loop Trail

Dam Site Loop Trail: is at 1-mile-long trail begins along the east side of the park office, which is accessible from the Bear Swamp trail or the Discovery Loop Trail. The Loop Trail covers a wide variety of forest types due to the dramatic changes in elevation along its course.

Point of interest includes: two dam sites, including a rock dam from an old mill site.



Dam Site Loop Trail

Discovery Loop Trail: is a 1.25-mile-long hiking trail located at the northwest side of the picnic shelter. The Discovery loop trail offers an easy hike that starts along Little Fishing Creek before turning back into other low land forest areas. The point of interest includes steel bridge connecting Discovery and Summit Loop Trails, Confluence of Bear Swamp Creek and Little Fishing Creek.



Main Trail

Main Trail is a 1.50-mile-long hiking and equestrian trail that takes visitors from the day use parking and campground areas along the gravel road and connects with all the connecting equestrian trails, such as Pine Loops, Ridge Loop, and the Silvertown trails branch off.



Moratock Trail

Moratock Trail: is a 1.75-mile-long trail located off the parking area and makes a loop around the equestrian campground. The trail meanders through pine and hardwood forested area.

Pine Loops Trail: The 3.50 long hiking and equestrian trail is located off the Main Trail and connects with the Silvertown Trail. The trail takes riders through pines and hardwoods along old roads and has a single track trail area.

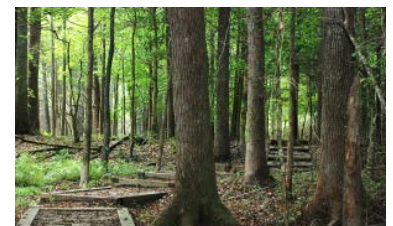


Pine Loops Trail

Ridge Loop Trail: The 1-mile loop trail is located off the Main trail and takes riders along the ridge with views of the creek.

Silvertown Loop Trail: is a 2-mile-long hiking and equestrian trail that is located off the Main Trail

Stream Loop Trail: is a 0.75-mile-long trail that has a trailhead at the north side of the picnic shelter. This loop trail follows Little Fishing Creek and exits into the large field near the Picnic area. The TRACK trail follows the Stream loop trail through a mixed hardwood forest, along the creek and through an open field.



Stream Loop Trail

Summit Loop Trail: The trailhead is located on the northeast side of the picnic shelter and allows hikers to experience a 3-mile-long low lying trails experience along Little Fishing Creek before turning up into the ridge line that remains of Medoc Mountain. This section from the bridge across Little Fishing Creek to the summit offers a challenging hiking experience. The highest point is 325 above sea level.



Summit Loop Trail

Bridle Trails: Approximately 10 miles of bridle/ equestrian trails travel through rolling terrain and follow a portion of beautiful Little Fishing Creek. Bridle trailhead parking is available just off Medoc Mountain Road on the south side of the park.

Mountain Biking/Hiking Trails

Eleven (11) miles of mountain and hiking biking trails are currently under construction.

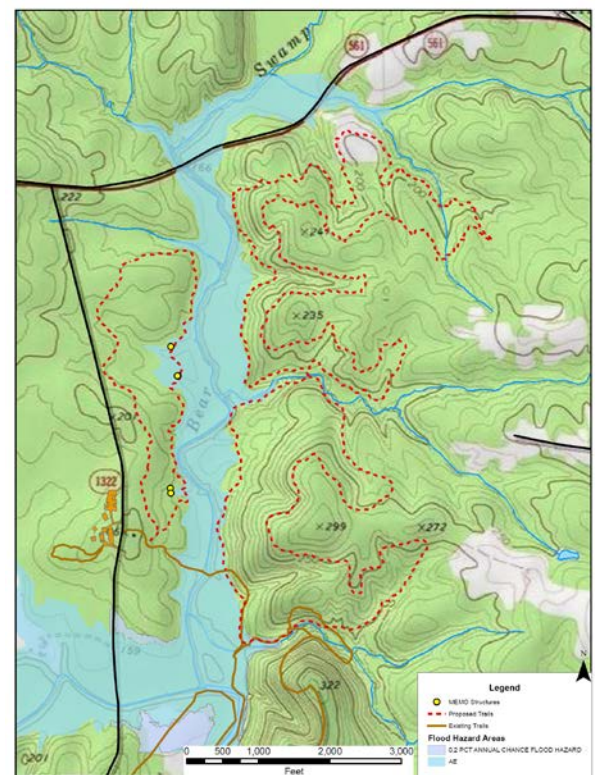
Pyrite: is a 5.30 mile trail which is currently under construction.

Saponi: is a 3.30 mile trail which is currently under construction.

Weller: is 2.20-mile bike trail which is currently under construction.

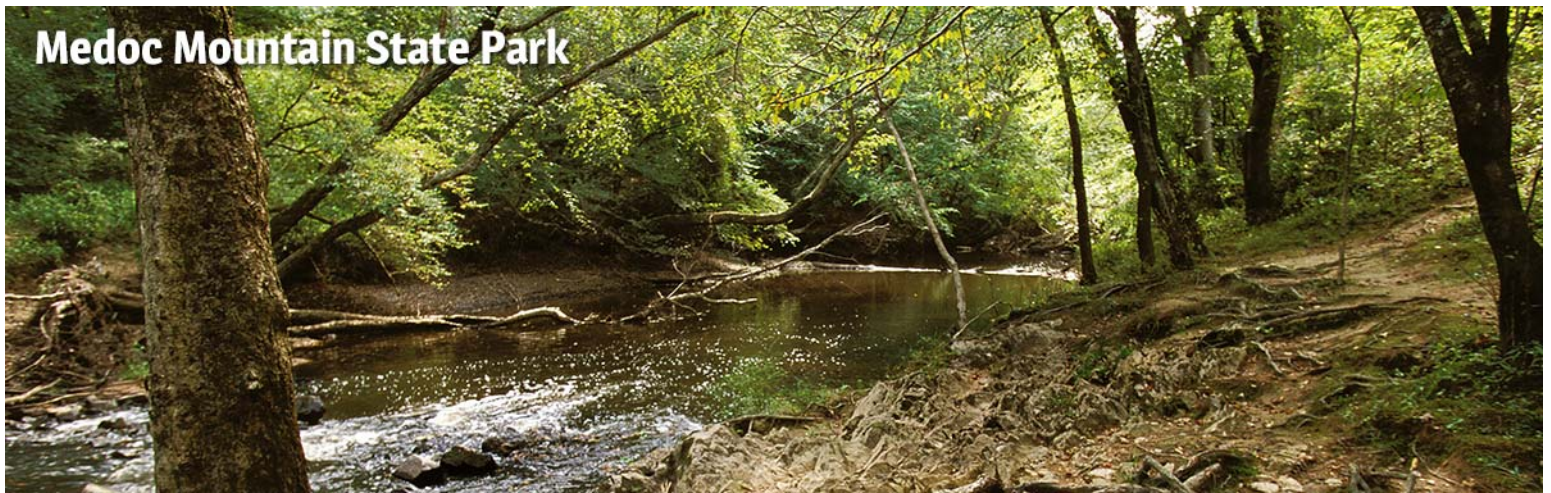


Mountain Bike Trail section



Mountain Bike System

IV. PLANNING



Park office

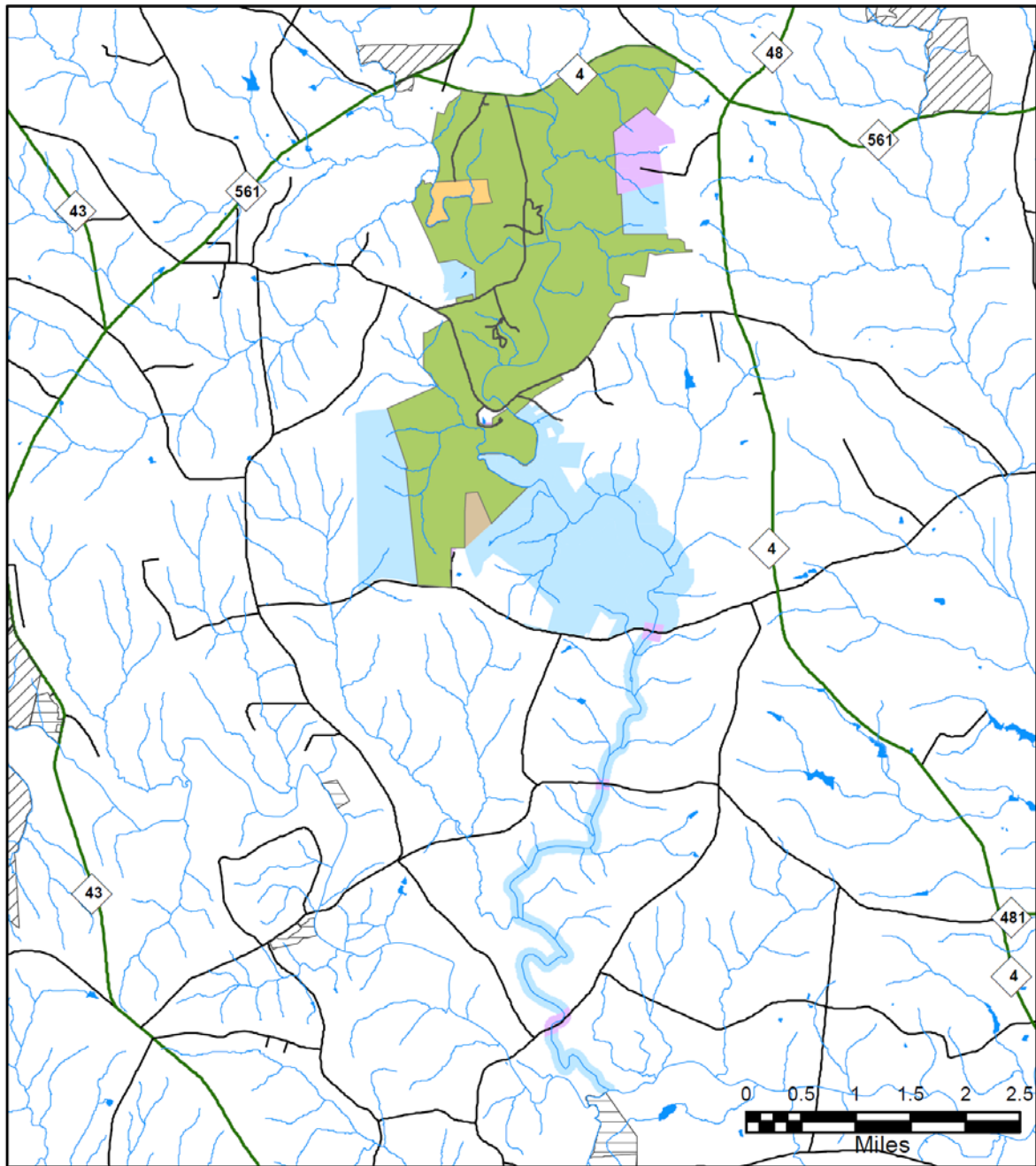


Vault Toilet in Equestrian area



Showerhouse

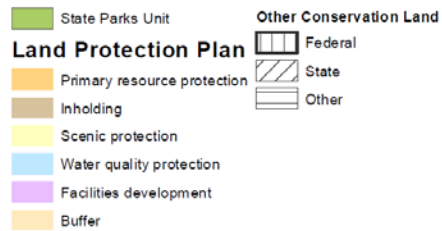
LAND PROTECTION PLAN MEDOC MOUNTAIN STATE PARK



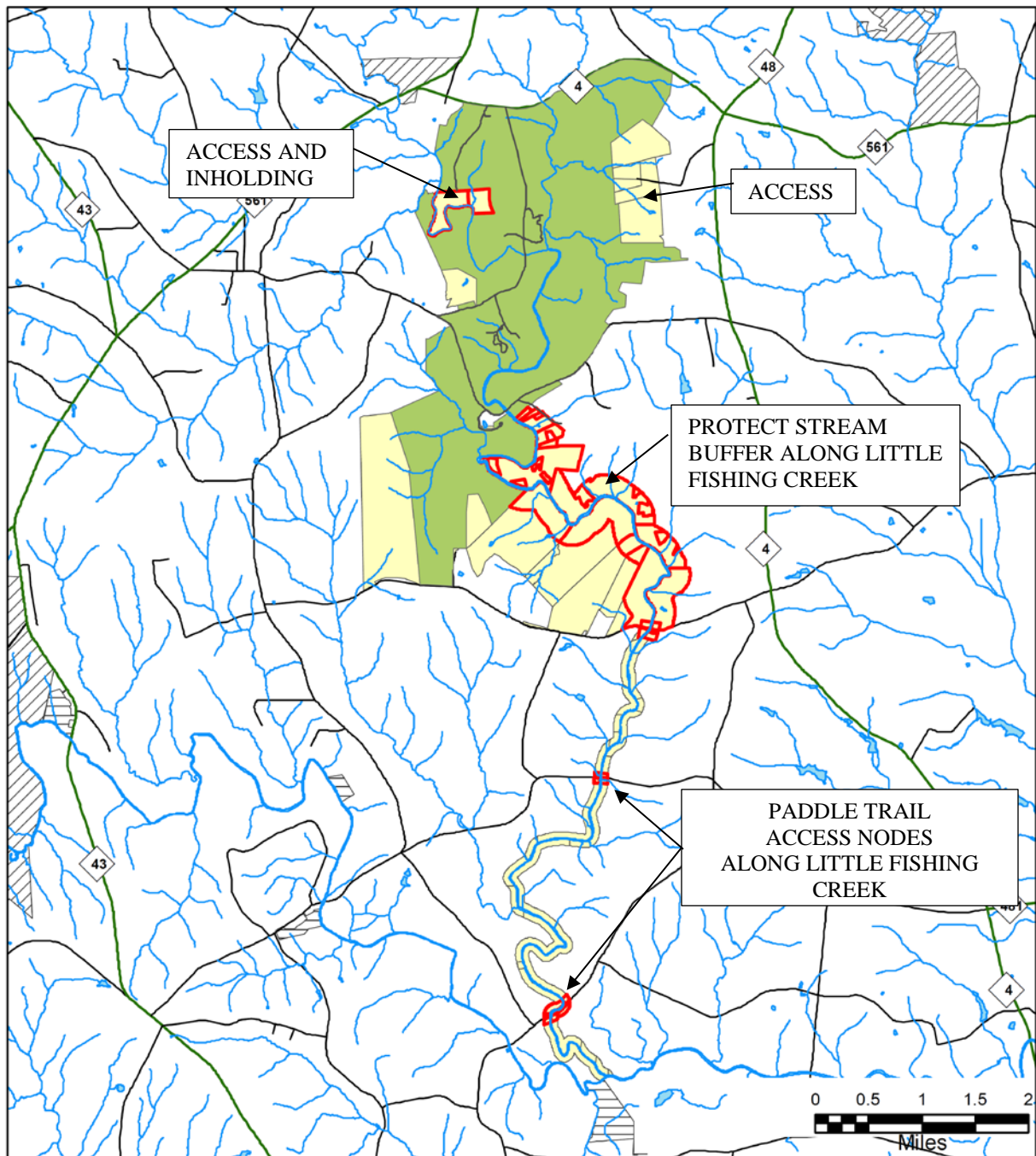
Medoc Mountain SP



Sept 2015



LAND PROTECTION PLAN-CRITICAL ACRES MEDOC MOUNTAIN STATE PARK



Medoc Mountain SP



Sept 2015

- Critical need
- State Parks Unit
- Future need

Land Protection Plan

- Federal
- State
- Other



PROJECT EVALUATION PROGRAM LIST
MEDOC MOUNTAIN STATE PARK

Project	Project Title	Cost
1	Group Camp (Lynch Farm)	\$ 3,050,000
2	Environmental /Community Building	\$1,779,000
3	L - Paddle Trail Access Nodes	\$540,000
4	Tent and Trailer Campground Proposed Loop	\$3,420,000
5	Trail Improvements	\$15,000
TOTAL		\$8,804,000

*** Estimated project cost does not include contingencies, design fee, nor escalation.*

1. Group Camp (Lynch Farm)

This project is planned for construction on property acquired in 1998, the Lynch Farm tract. This project also includes the development of an access road, 6 group campsites, a universal shower house, a trail connection to the park office/visitors center, a picnic shelter, metal gate, and associated support facilities such as adequate parking, informational kiosk, electrical service, and water and sewer service. The existing access road will be widened and paved for adequate access to the facility. This is an opportunity site for group camping which has been a popular activity at the park.



Boone House on Lynch Farm

2. Environmental /Community Building

The flexible space within a community building will allow a multitude of user groups to utilize the proposed building within the park. Currently, there is not an indoor facility that can accommodate a large number of people at one time. Typical uses would include: community meetings, regional staff meetings, facilitation of large school groups, recreational programs, environmental education programs, and event rentals. The building program currently budgeted through capital improvements includes clearing and landscaping, a 3,000 square foot building, adequate parking spaces, and associated utility connections.

3. Paddle Trail Access Nodes

Little Fishing Creek is generally too narrow and lacks sufficient water flow upstream of S.R. 1322 to extend the 2.5-mile-long Little Fishing Creek Paddle Trail further upstream. The paddle trail has the potential to be lengthened downstream, providing a longer regional recreational experience, attracting additional visitors to the park.



Little Fishing Creek

This project proposes enhancing the Little Fishing Creek primary paddle trail access near the intersection of S.R. 1322 by relocating the parking area, improving the existing facilities and adding amenities. This project will also improve the second paddle trail access at S.R. 1002 by renovating existing facilities and adding an universal vault toilet, replacing existing footbridge, replacing paddle launch pad and adding adequate gravel parking area along Medoc Mountain Road.

In addition to the two existing park paddle trail accesses, three future downstream paddle trail accesses are proposed to the south portion of the park. Each of these potential paddle trail accesses occurs at the intersection of bridge crossings.

Paddle Access 3 is proposed at the intersection of Silvertown Road/ S.R. 1214 and Little Fishing Creek. The southwest side of the bridge offers the opportunity for future paddle access due to an existing cleared utility easement and the existing topography is a gentle slope to access the creek.

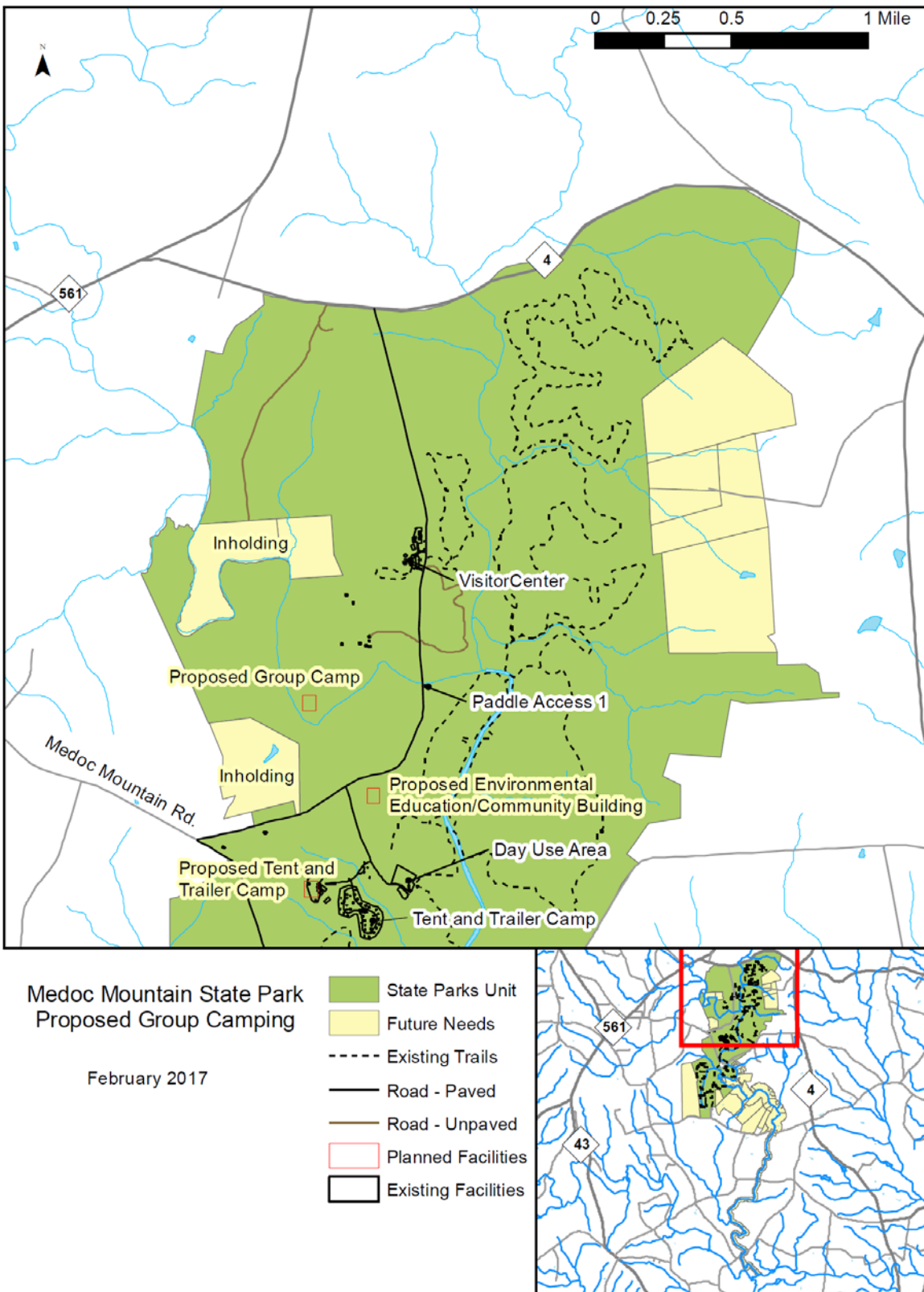
4. Tent and Trailer Campground Proposed Loop

An additional camping loop is needed near the main park road entrance. Scope of work includes: a proposed 50- seat universal amphitheater located near the former group camp facility, additional water spigots to each electrical campsite, improve the dump station, adequate camping sites located 150' on center, upgrading current campsites to standard construction code, access gate for operations, additional 10 pull thru campsites with electric and water connections, and informational kiosk. The existing showerhouse will remain. This area is near an open multi-purpose field and the bluff loop trail leads towards the Little Fishing Creek. Two existing ranger residences along Medoc State Park Road are located to the northwest which are needed for operational purposes. The western portion of the campground area is located in a natural heritage area, which is not feasible to build additional campsites.

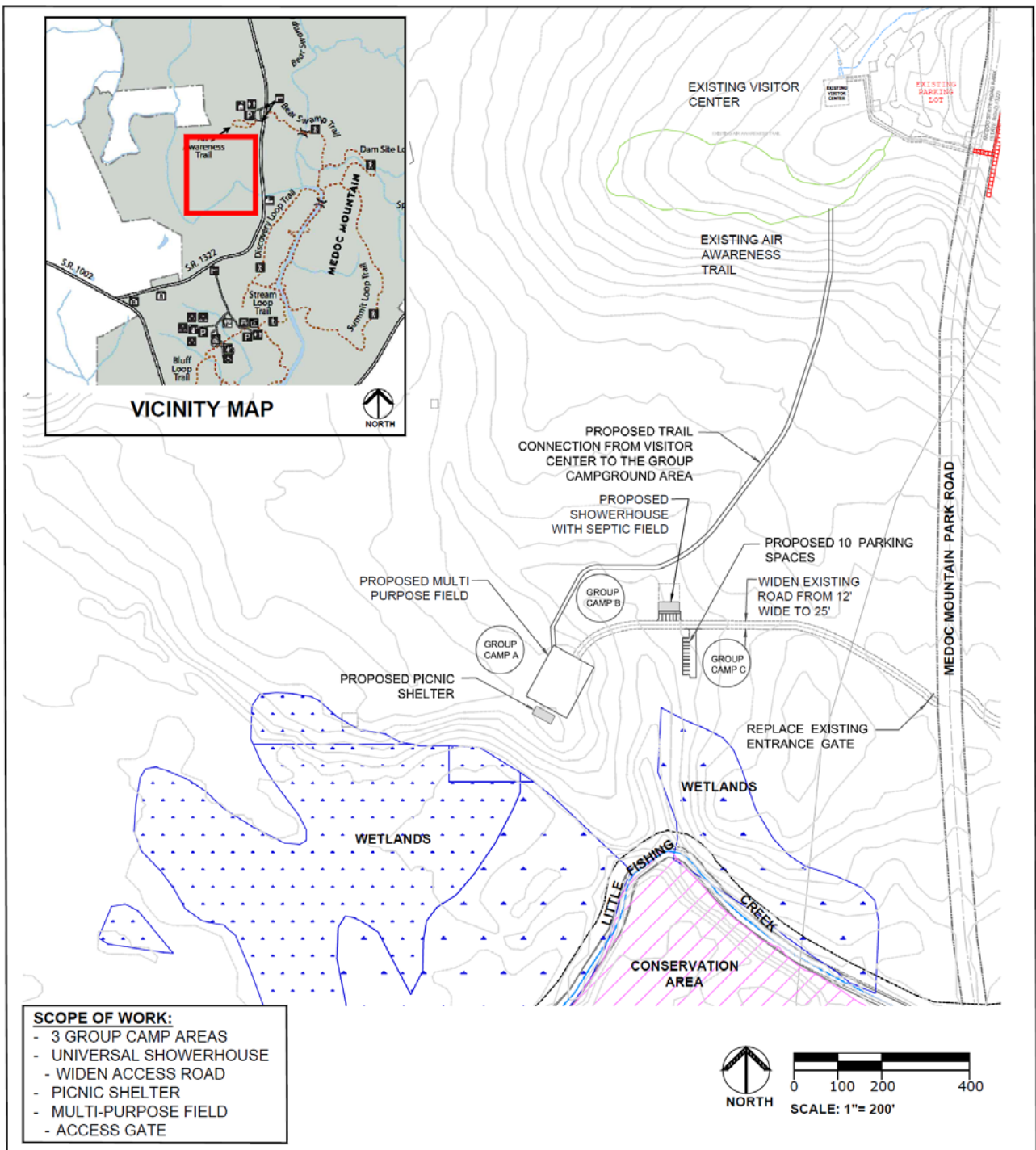
5. Trail Improvements

A trail is needed to connect existing visitor center to the future Lynch group camping area to the northwest. The length and alignment will be determined by trails staff.

MEDOC MOUNTAIN STATE PARK PLANNING PROJECTS



PROJECT #1: GROUP CAMPING (LYNCH FARM)- ENLARGED AREA
MEDOC MOUNTAIN STATE PARK



Date: Feb 2017, December 2015
Drawn By: CR

Medoc Mountain State Park
Group Camping

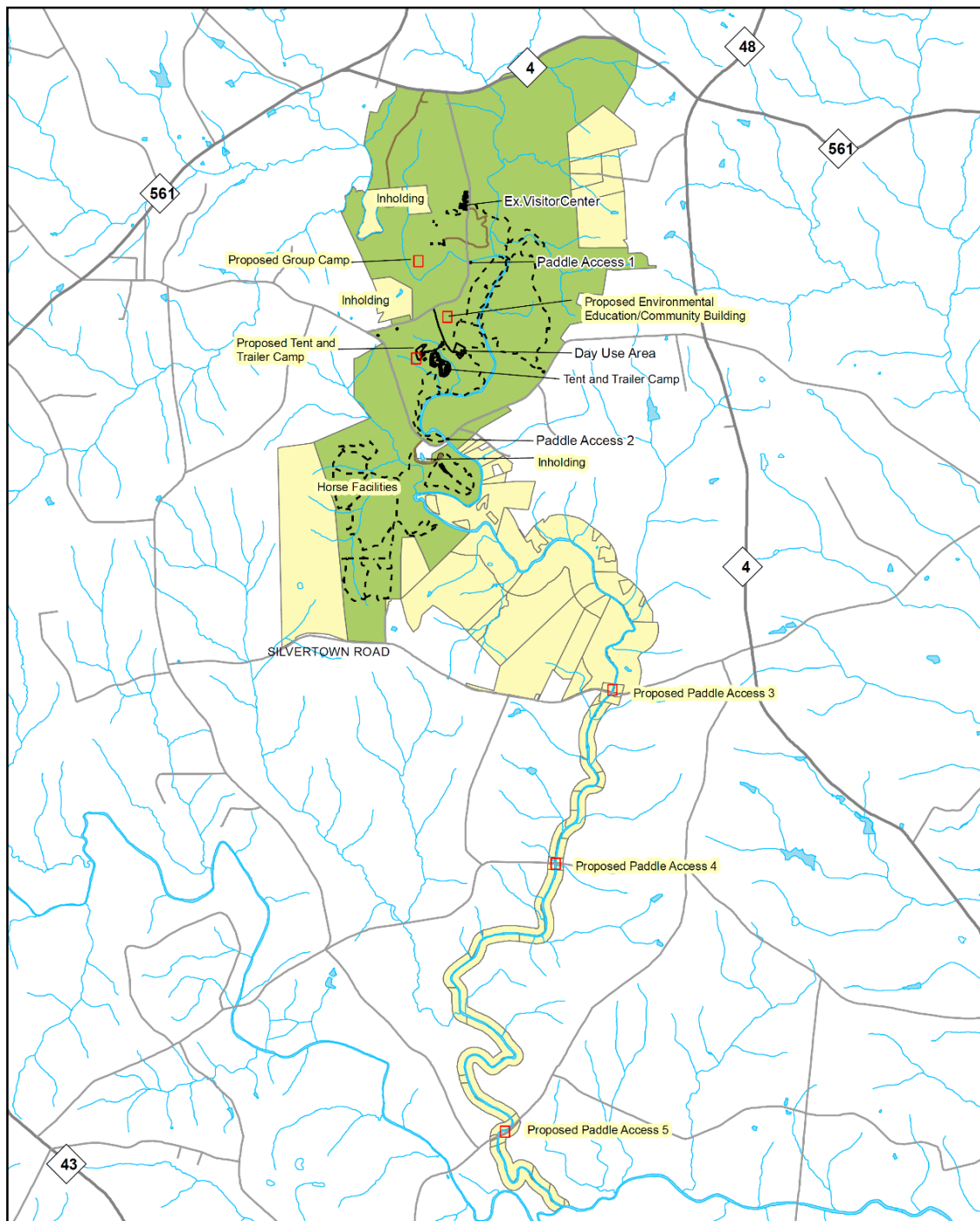


N.C. Division of Parks
and Recreation
Mail Service Center 1615
Raleigh, N.C. 27699-1615

PROJECT # 2. ENVIRONMENTAL/COMMUNITY BUILDING
MEDOC MOUNTAIN STATE PARK



PROJECT #3 – PADDLE TRAIL ACCESS NODES MEDOC MOUNTAIN STATE PARK



Medoc Mountain State Park
GMP Proposed Facilities

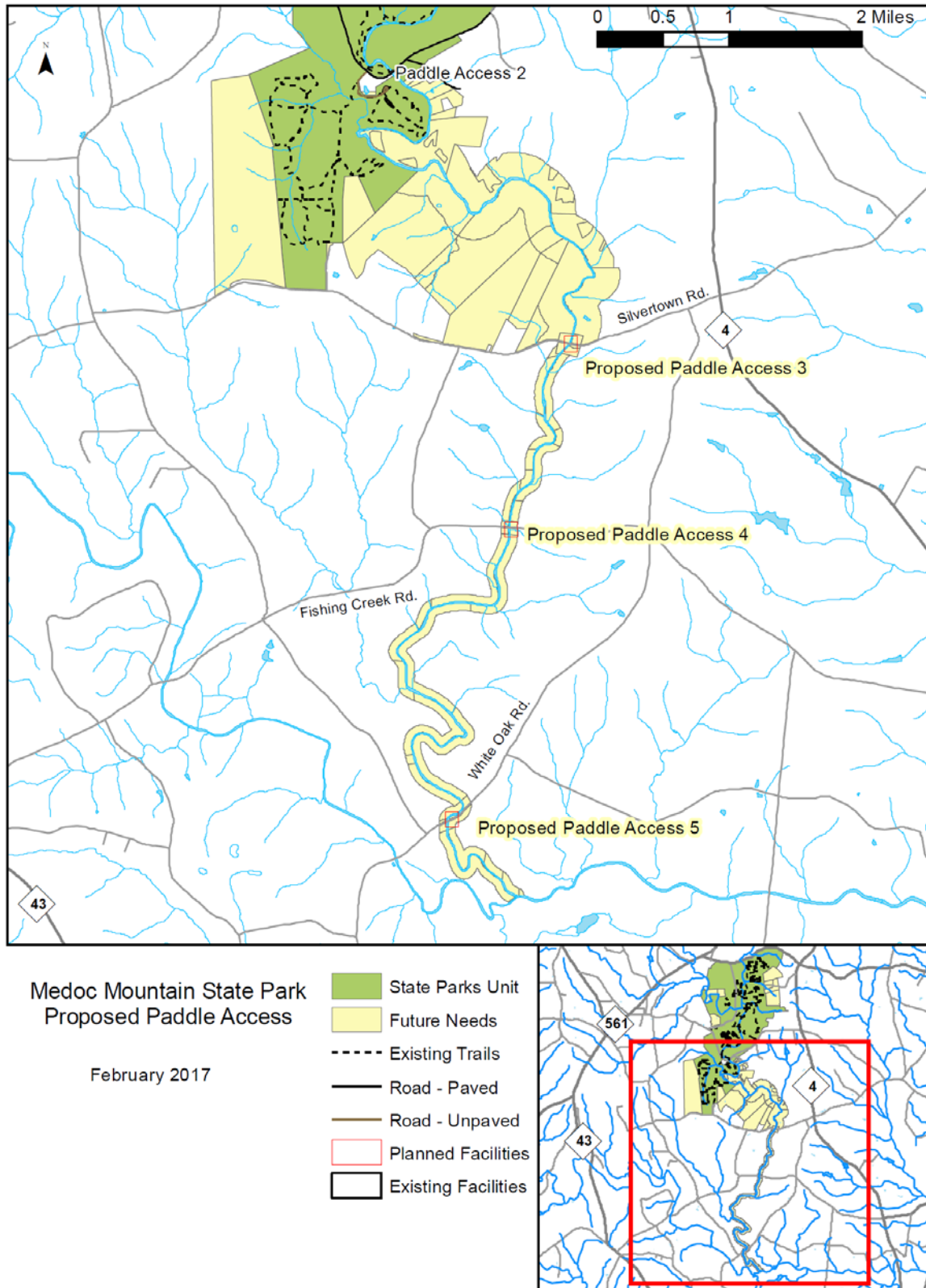
October 2015



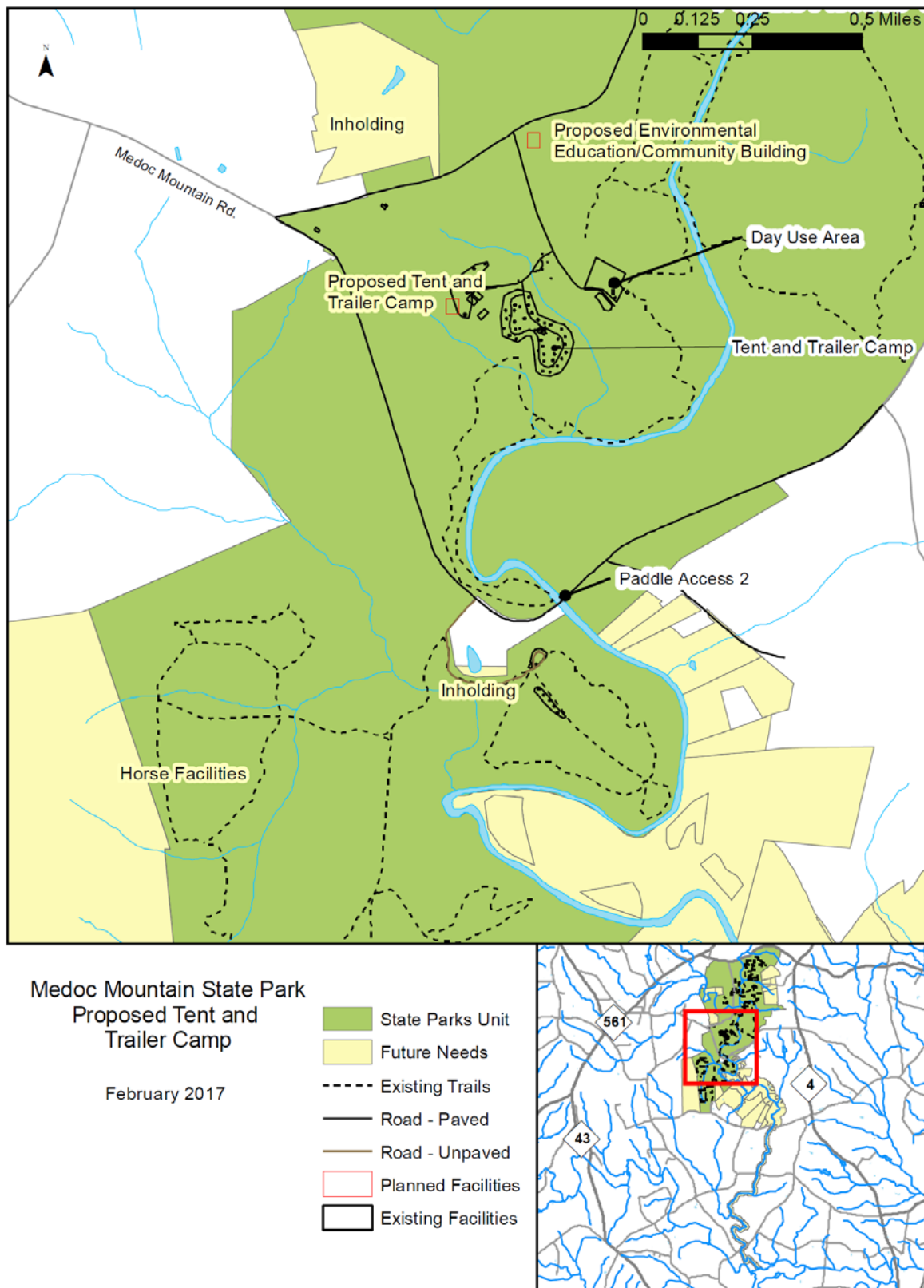
0 0.5 1 2 Miles

- Future Needs
- State Parks Unit
- Existing Facilities
- Planned Facilities

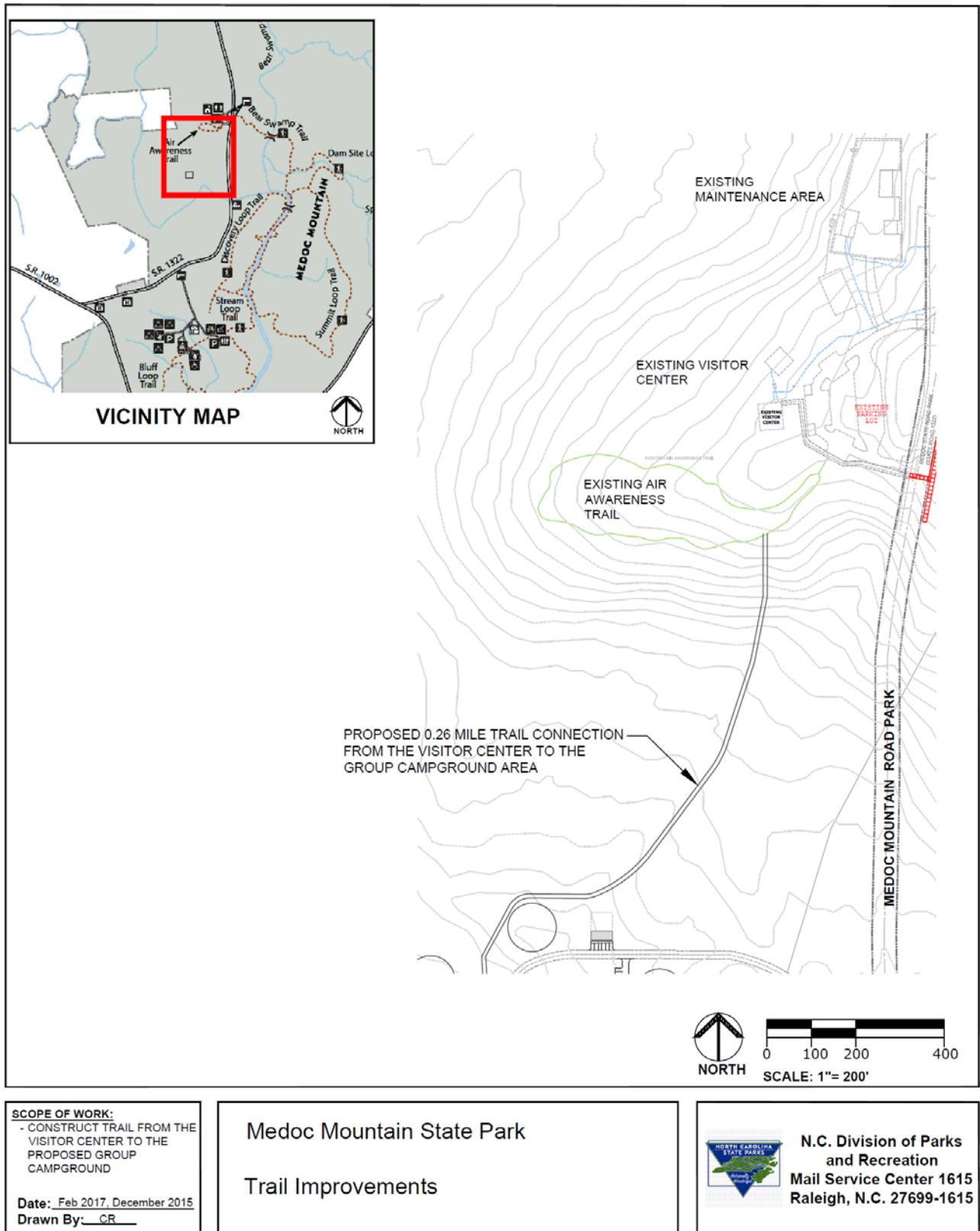
PROJECT #3- PADDLE TRAIL ACCESS AREAS ENLARGED AREA
MEDOC MOUNTAIN STATE PARK



PROJECT#4: TENT AND TRAILER CAMPGROUND
MEDOC MOUNTAIN STATE PARK



PROJECT #5: TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS MEDOC MOUNTAIN STATE PARK



PARK MAP
MEDOC MOUNTAIN STATE PARK

